

Message Text

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15

ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4452

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTO DOMINGO 3484

FROM THE AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, CASC, DR

SUBJECT: THREE PUERTO RICAN PRISONERS

REF: SD 3451

1. I DISCUSSED THE CASE OF THE THREE PUERTO RICANS WITH POLIBIO DIAZ LATE YESTERDAY AFTERNOON. AFTER THE USUAL DISCLAIMER OF NOT WISHING TO APPEAR TO BE INTERFERING IN DOMINICAN INTERNAL AFFAIRS, I MENTIONED MY CONCERN THAT MANY AMERICANS, INCLUDING CONGRESSMEN, WOULD HAVE DIFFICULTY UNDERSTANDING THE VERDICT OF GUILTY AND THIRTY YEAR SENTENCES ON THE BASIS OF WHAT WOULD APPEAR TO THEM TO HAVE BEEN LITTLE IF ANY EVIDENCE. DIAZ IN REPLY EXPOUNDED ON THE INTRICACY OF THE NAPOLEONIC CODE. I CONTINUED THAT WHILE LAWYERS MIGHT ENJOY A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ANGLO SAXON AND FRENCH RULES OF EVIDENCE, THE POINT I WISHED TO MAKE WAS POLITICAL NOT LEGAL. I MENTIONED THAT CONGRESS WOULD RETURN TO SESSION IN EARLY SEPTEMBER AND SOME MEMBERS MIGHT VERY WELL THEN TAKE UP THE CAUSE OF THE PUERTO RICANS BOTH OUT OF CONVICTION AND AS A VOTE-GETTING ISSUE. PUBLICITY RESULTING FROM SUCH ACTION MIGHT NOT HELP THE DOMINICAN IMAGE IN THE U.S., I SPECULATED.

2. DIAZ GOT THE POINT IMMEDIATELY AND SAID IN CONFIDENCE THAT HE AGREED WITH THE VIEWS I HAD EXPRESSED. IN HIS PERSONAL VIEW, HE SAID, IT WOULD BE WELL TO GO THROUGH THE APPEAL PRO-
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CEEDINGS AND THEN URGE THE PRESIDENT TO REDUCE THE SENTENCES

RADICALLY OR DEPORT THEM. HE SAID, IN CONCLUDING, THAT HE
WOULD USE ALL OF HIS SKILLS AS A LAWYER TO BRING ABOUT SUCH AN
OUTCOME.
HURWITCH

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